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The Mechanistic Conception of Life. By J. LOEB. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1912.—pp. 232.

All that this volume really contains is a series of papers selected from among the many which Professor Leob has published, and presenting the results of experimental investigation in the application of physical chemistry to biological phenomena. One or two papers are exceptions to this, being addresses prepared for special purposes, such as the Monistic Congress at Hamburg in 1911, but even exceptions do not differ from the other papers in general character. The selected papers are now called Essays and deal almost exclusively with the following subjects: The Activation of the Egg and Heredity, Tropisms, the Comparative Physiology of the Nervous System, Pattern Adaptation in Fishes, Physiological Morphology, Fertilization, Artificial Parthenogenesis, the Prevention of the Death of the Egg, and the Experimental Study of the Influence of the Environment on Animals.

No one can deny the brilliancy and the fruitfulness of Professor Loeb's specific scientific hypotheses, methods, and results, but in this volume he frequently leaves this field and dogmatizes concerning certain broader questions for the solution of which he gives no evidence of having considered even a small part of the pertinent data. The successful application of physical chemistry to certain isolated vital phenomena is a most praiseworthy result. But of what does it give proof or evidence? Professor Loeb opines and states dogmatically, that it shows that all life and all that life manifests is mechanistic, and that there will never be a science of ethics, etc., until conduct is explained by, or reduced to, or made compatible with physical chemistry. However, what he means by mechanistic, Professor Loeb nowhere states with percision, although one can glean that he means 'determined' or 'caused.' But, that vital phenomena and all conduct are mechanistic in this sense, is a position which, as is well known to the majority of scientists and philosophers, is not new, but has been held for a long time, going back, indeed, to the Greeks. It is a position which may be supported somewhat by Professor Loeb's experiments, but it cannot be greatly strengthened thereby. Professor Loeb's position, then, is that of holding that his own experimental results and the cognate ones of other biologists give evidence or even proof against there being such entities as a specific vital energy, or an Entelechy, itself uncaused, but causing and directing, and against there being genuine freedom of initiative or of will. But he does not define the terms which he uses and implies, namely, 'mechanistic,' 'compatible with,' 'reducible to,' 'explainable by,' etc., in any precise and technical manner, so as to leave the way open to decide whether or not life and life's manifestations as well as other things are mechanistic in any more exact sense than that of 'determined' or 'caused.' What is meant, and what is implied, *if* these phenomena are mechanistic, are questions which interest the philosopher as much as does the question, whether they are mechanistic at all or not. If a mechanism is a system of moving particles acted upon by forces in accordance with the classical principles of Newton, d'Alembert, Hamilton and Lagrange, then, are the other things of the universe, such as behavior, structure, function, organism, physical objects, etc., ultimately *identical with* such a dynamical system, or *explainable by* it, or only *compatible with* it? This is as much of a philosophical question as is the other, but Professor Loeb does not touch it. Accordingly, if one reads *The Mechanistic Conception of Life* in the hope of finding anything new philosophically, he will be disappointed. The book contains only an account of certain recent results in experimental biology which are consistent with the position that most phenomena are determined and caused, and that for some, the specific causes, not known twenty years ago, can now be indicated. This is all that Professor Loeb's book does by way of establishing or clarifying the mechanistic conception of life.

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The Treatment of Personality by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume: A Study, in the Interests of Ethical Theory, of an Aspect of the Dialectic of English Empiricism. By JAY WILLIAM HUDSON. The University of Missouri Studies, Philosophy and Education Series, Vol. I, No. 1. Columbia, Mo., The University of Missouri, May, 1911.—pp. xvi, 96.

The thesis of this book may be stated as follows: Personality is the central concept for ethics and there is no person to any except an *a priori* epistemology. English Empiricism is chosen as the most striking example of an attempt to construct metaphysics without an *a priori* foundation, and the author seeks to prove his thesis by showing the dialectical self-refutation of the treatment of personality in this philosophy. The Empiricists either tacitly assume *a priori* elements or they fall into contradictions that demand such elements for their solution. Professor Hudson's own position,—the position from which he criticises the Empiricists,—is given in outline at the end of the book (Chap. VIII). It might be described, perhaps, as an idealistic pluralism and, as Professor Hudson himself points out, is similar to the philosophy of Professor G. H. Howison.

Professor Hudson's treatment of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume is essentially like that usually given by idealist critics, except for the fact that attention is more specifically directed to their treatment of personality. The point, however, is the growth of the *tabula rasa* hypothesis and the impossible consequences which it wrought in Hume's philosophy. The Empiricists are used as horrible examples of philosophers who omit the *a priori* and their bad end is used as a warning to all pragmatists and radical empiricists who at present are inclined to follow a similar course. The essential, if not the only, significance of the School, is to introduce the philosophy of Kant.

In all this the criticisms of Empiricism are less interesting than the assumptions made by the critic. Professor Hudson seems to feel no difficulty in assuming that the disjunction,—Human empiricism or apriorism,—is an exhaustive statement of mutually exclusive alternatives. Thus he apparently regards all empiricism (*e. g.*, pragmatism) as essentially Humean and all